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NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

VERSE 1681 OF THE *AVES* OF ARISTOPHANES

The archetype of our present text of Aristophanes read *βαδίζειν* in this much-discussed verse. This is the reading in thirteen of the extant manuscripts that contain the *Aves*. Two others (Δ B) have *βαδίζοι γ'*.

Modern scholars have proposed many substitutes: *βαβάζει γ'* Bentley; *βαβακίζει γ'* Reiske; *τυτυβίζοι γ'* Brunck; *βατίζει γ'* Dindorf; *βαύζει γ'* Cobet; *βαβράζει γ'* Meineke; *βαταρίζοι γ'* Lenting; *σακίζει γ'* Müller-Strübing.

The Alexandrian scholars had before them a text which they could not interpret satisfactorily. The scholium on 1680 begins with a paraphrase of 1680 f.: 'μὰ τὸν Δία' φησὶν 'οὐ λέγει παραδοῦναι ἀλλὰ βαδίζειν καὶ ἀναχωρεῖν, οὕτω δὲ αὐτό φησι βαρβάρως καὶ δυσφράστως ὥσπερ αἱ χελιδόνες.' It is at least clear that in this commentator's text the uncertain word was a form that he thought must mean "go." Symmachus, who is quoted in the scholium on 1681, declared that he did not understand what the poet meant: οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ τοῦτου νοῦς φανερός· οὐδὲν τι δύναται ἴδιον τῶν χελιδόνων 'βάδις', αἶ γε μὴδὲ πορεία χρόνται ὡς τὰ ἄλλα τῶν ὀρνέων, καὶ μάλιστα τὰ μὴ πτητικά. Didymus got a meaning for the verses by juggling with ὥσπερ: καταλλήλως εἶχεν εἰ ἔλεγεν 'ὡς τὰς χελιδόνας,' θέλει δὲ λέγειν 'εἰ μὴ βαδίζει πρὸς τὰς χελιδόνας'· διὸ καὶ ἐποίσει.

οὐκοῦν παραδοῦναι ταῖς χελιδόσιν λέγει.

ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς πρὸς αὐτὰς βαδίζει εἰς Νεφελοκοκκυγίαν. The form of the uncertain word in the text of Didymus was certainly not the infinitive, but an indicative. I believe that this word was *βασίζει*. Aristophanes had written:

εἰ μὴ βασίζει γ' ὥσπερ αἱ χελιδόνες.

The Alexandrian scholars recognized that *βασίζει* was a new word which Aristophanes had coined, after his wont. The acute commentary on τὸν βάδον *βαδίζομεν* in *Aves* 42 and similar notes show that they were familiar with these inventions of the poet, but they failed to apprehend the jest in *βασίζει*. They saw that the word was derived from *βάσις*, but assumed that *βάσις* carried the idea of *βαίνω*, and consequently naturally interpreted *βασίζει* by *βαδίζει*, *ἀναχωρεῖ*.

Aristophanes, however, meant "rhythmizes," "uses rhythm." He himself has *βάσις* in the sense of "measured movement" in *Thesm.* 966 ff.:

ἀλλὰ χρῆν

πρῶτον εὐκύκλου χορείας εὐφνᾷ στήσαι βάσιν.

Cf. Plato *Rep.* 399 e: ἐπόμενον γὰρ δὴ ταῖς ἀρμονίαις ἂν ἡμῖν εἴη τὸ περὶ ῥυθμούς, μὴ ποικίλους αὐτοὺς διώκειν μηδὲ παντοδαπὰς βάσεις, ἀλλὰ βίον ῥυθμούς ἰδεῖν κοσμίον τε καὶ ἀνδρείου τίνες εἰσίν. Cf. 400 a and b.

It is a noteworthy fact that the rhythm of the Greek trimeters of Pseudartabas in the *Acharnians* (100, 104) and of the peeler in the *Thesmophoriazusae* (1001 ff.) is unimpeachable, notwithstanding their amusing lapses in forms and spelling. Similarly Triballus in the *Aves* (1628 f., 1678) makes no mistakes in rhythm, with a single exception. In verse 1678 his affirmation involves the designation of the Princess Βασίλεια (υ υ υ). Whether he is endeavoring to pronounce this word, or Aristophanes is humorously letting him have a try at βασιλίνα, he apparently lapses in an unparalleled manner; he ends the trimeter with a word that is metrically impossible. Aristophanes probably instructed his actor to mark the false values and recite Βασίλιναν with emphasis. The audience at once became alert.

What Triballus says in 1678 f. is sufficiently clear, as Heracles promptly declares. Poseidon is hard-pressed; his only resource is a mock appeal, made apparent by the word-play (Βασί-ζει, βασι-λιναν), to the excellence of the Greek of Triballus. The comic argument, therefore, in 1680 f., is: "Tells us to give her up? Not he! Unless he manages Greek rhythm as do the swallows." Poseidon humorously insists that Triballus cannot mean the Princess (Βασίλεια) since he says βασιλίναν. He is referring to some other lady!

This reading was suggested to me by a note of the scholiast on 1680. After the paraphrase, at the beginning of the scholium, which I have quoted above, he adds: τὸ δὲ 'βασιλίναν' εἰς (*quod attinet ad*) τὸ 'βάσιν' (*the part* βασι-) μετέβαλεν ὁ Ποσειδῶν παρόσον (*quatenus*) τὴν δευτέραν ἐξέτεινε, i. e., Poseidon insists that the word must be βασιλίναν. This is an acute observation. The scholiast misinterprets Βασί-ζει, as the paraphrase shows, and thus fails to catch the poet's jest; nevertheless he apprehends that in some way the point of Poseidon's objection is the false quantity of the second syllable in βασιλίναν. The scholiast's sense of humor did not carry him quite far enough.

It is scarcely credible that he had any other word in his text than Βασί-ζει. In course of time this was supplanted by Βαδί-ζει, which the commentators had used in explaining it. This involved the change of a single letter. At some time not now determinable, Βασί-ζει γ' or Βαδί-ζει γ' became Βαδί-ζειν, and was adopted by the compilers of the variorum archetype.